

This special threat advisory is intended to provide situational awareness of threats to public order, public safety, and the security of public officials arising from violent online rhetoric opposing new and ongoing public health restrictions (Information current as of 25 January 2022, 0900hrs). The IMCIT continues to maintain visibility on emerging threats and will provide updates as required.

SPECIAL THREAT ADVISORY

FREEDOM CONVOY 2022: CONVERGING IN OTTAWA JANUARY 28/29, 2022

KEY POINTS

- Reliable estimates on the number of convoys, vehicles and people arriving in Ottawa for 28/29 January are unavailable at this time.
- Impromptu protests in places of significance around Ottawa, such as the offices or homes of political figures, public health officials or at media outlets are likely to occur throughout the duration of the convoy's presence in Ottawa, however, reliable information on times and locations remain unknown at this time.
- The IMCIT assesses that there has been an increase in online narratives supportive of the convoy among both ideologically motivated networks, as well as in general public discourse. A significant amount of financial support has also been raised through increasing donations to the main fundraiser associated with the convoy.

BACKGROUND

In early January 2022, the Government of Canada announced a federal vaccine mandate requiring that all truck drivers crossing the border must be fully vaccinated as of January 15, 2022.¹ In response to this requirement, a national event entitled "Freedom Convoy 2022" was planned via social media², which advertised as a fundraiser and then gained momentum on other platforms. The convoy began on January 22 in various provinces and is slated to arrive in Ottawa between January 28 and 29, 2022.

CURRENT STATUS

Opposition to vaccine mandates for truckers continue to drive discussions and receive widespread promotion within anti-public health order networks. As the date of the convoy's arrival in Ottawa draws closer, news of the convoy is receiving more frequent mainstream media attention. It is also important to note that the convoy's progress is being shared on individual social media accounts that, in the past, have not promoted anti-public health order narratives. Some perceive the convoy as a positive showing

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of unity amongst Canadians. Narratives opposing the convoy have also been observed, however, no counter-actions have been identified at the time of this writing.

Scope and Scale

It remains unclear how many transport trucks, passenger vehicles and individuals will arrive in Ottawa between January 28 and 29, 2022. Fundraising efforts for the convoy continue to see an increase, though there is no clear information about how the funds will be dispersed. As of 0900hrs on 2022-01-25, the main GoFundMe page associated to the convoy has reportedly raised \$4,240,370. The length of time that the convoy will be in Ottawa is currently unknown. The overall perception among some supporters and participants of the convoy is that, if enough truckers protest and cause supply shortages, this could be the major push needed to end what the anti-public health order movement calls “government tyranny” (i.e. the perceived overreach of the government related to all things COVID – lockdowns, vaccine mandates, etc.).

Convoy Participants

It is assessed that this convoy will include ideologically motivated individuals with grievances that are anti-government, anti-authority and conspiratorial in nature. In addition, individuals with racially motivated and ethno-nationalist views may also be attracted to this event, though the purpose of the event is not rooted in these specific grievances. The presence of ideologically motivated individuals does not necessarily mean ideologically motivated criminality or ideologically motivated violence will occur. Note that within these ideologically motivated networks, not all individuals support extreme activities and there is a diversity of views regarding the use of violence. This convoy is also attracting individuals who are not aligned with any specific ideology or group, but who have experienced personal hardships (such as job loss) due to COVID-19 and are upset with provincial or federal government responses as the pandemic continues to impact daily life. In addition, rhetoric observed online in various networks known for more extreme content have made references to the January 6, 2021 events in the US Capitol when discussing the convoy to Ottawa.³

Routes

Information from law enforcement partners, as well as open source networks indicate that the convoys are headed to Ottawa by various east, west and south-bound routes throughout Canada.^{4 5} IMCIT and law enforcement partners across Canada are engaged and sharing rapidly evolving information. Reliable estimates on the numbers of convoys, vehicles and people arriving in Ottawa are not available at this time, however, as some vehicles may participate for a portion of the convoy in solidarity without continuing the entire distance to Ottawa.

After the Convoy's Arrival in Ottawa

Traffic disruptions throughout Canada have already occurred as a result of the convoy, and disruptions within the National Capital Region are expected as convoys arrive in Ottawa. Once in Ottawa, impromptu protests may occur with little or no open source advertising beforehand due to the convergence of a large number of people and the ability to mobilize in the area on short notice. Based

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on past protests opposing public health orders, it is possible that protected sites such as the Prime Minister's residence, as well as businesses such as media outlets, may be attractive locations for protest.

Support from Like-Minded Individuals in the United States

Online narratives indicating support from like-minded individuals within the United States have also been observed, although information is limited at this time. Advertisements for border actions on January 29 in Woodstock Maine, Sault Ste. Marie Michigan, and Sweetgrass Montana have been identified.⁶ A generic flyer has circulated Canadian anti-public health order networks advertising January 29 as a date to block borders, however has no specific locations have been listed.⁷ In addition, a Tweet online from a Canadian individual with 2.2 million followers stated that, "American truckers are joining",⁸ however the validity of the comment at this time remains unknown.

Sentiments Towards the Police

Some convoy organizers have been in contact with local and provincial law enforcement and have expressed positive sentiments towards the police.⁹ However, a report from E Division regarding a solidarity protest on 2022-01-23 in Salmon Arm, BC indicates that approximately 20-30 protesters were verbally abusive to attending police officers.¹⁰

The IMCIT is liaising with law enforcement partners to maintain visibility on this event and other events related to the opposition of trucker mandates which are occurring nationally, and will provide updates as required.

Issued by: Ideologically Motivated Criminal Intelligence Team (IMCIT)

Approved by: Director, Directorate of Strategic Intelligence, Federal Policing National Intelligence

¹ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/canada-truckers-vaccine-reversal-1.6313200>

² <https://www.facebook.com/Freedom-Convoy-2022-100286905896085>

Personal Info.

⁴ <https://canada-unity.com/bearhug>

⁵ <https://action4canada.com/convoy-for-freedom-2022/>

⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=10159657379640813&set=gm.495450218579821>

⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/310624427062402/posts/493680662090110/>

Personal Info.

⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/convoy/posts/367735114726090/>

¹⁰ Email received from E Division Criminal Intelligence Section dated 2022-01-24